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ABSTRACT

Covering 1979-80, which was the final year of the initial four year grant period for the Partnership for Rural Improvement (PRI), this report details the major assessments and program adjustments made during that year. Several program developments of critical importance to understanding the transition occurring in PRI are highlighted in the section "Major Program Developments." The section entitled "Evaluation Studies" describes the focal points of 1979-80 evaluation efforts. Summary observations and recommendations made by the review team are included. "Illustrative Project Activity" describes a number of the more than 80 projects in which PRI is currently involved. Projects described in this section have been chosen to illustrate key dimensions of transition issues: inferences can be drawn from these projects with broad application to the underlying PRI concepts. A section on "Plans for 1980-81" indicates an expanded use of task forces, development of community service fellowships and internships, establishment of a community education demonstration site, and expansion to Walla Walla Community College District. The financial management and budget of PRI are described in the final section. Attention is drawn to the fact that an additional grant has been awarded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for continuing and expanding the work initiated in the 1976-1980 period. (CM)

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PARTNERSHIP FOR RURAL IMPROVEMENT: PRI IN TRANSITION

ANNUAL REPORT
1979-80

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I. INTRODUCTION

The period covered by this report was a time of major assessment and program adjustment for the Partnership for Rural Improvement. The final year of the initial four year grant period was completed. A proposal for continued support from the W. K. Kelloggg Foundation was prepared and an additional grant of $958,585 was awarded for continuing and expanding the work initiated in the 1976-1980 period. The commitment and involvement of members of PRI have been strengthened through greater participation in projects and in the form of direct financial contributions. A wide range of successful projects of local and regional scope have demonstrated the viability of the Partnership concept. Less successful projects have indicated the importance of initiating new activities to overcome weaknesses in program design.

The credibility of the Partnership for Rural Improvement as a helpful and effective contributor to the realization of opportunities, and solution of pressing problems, in communities, counties, and larger regions of Washington has been widely accepted. The Partnership has been invited by communities, organizations, and regional associations to serve as a partner in resolving issues which appear to require external resources and skills available through the collaborative network established by PRI.

The new thrusts of the program, outlined in greater detail in later sections of this report, are partially in response to findings from the first four years of evaluation. But proposed adjustments also arise from creative insight by program participants and external program reviewers. The new emphases will be accompanied by a transition in organizational design and operating procedure.

Additional resources from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation will insure the continuity of the tested features of the Partnership for Rural Development,

while allowing for additions to the program through increased viability and effectiveness. The new resources will enable PRI to test the transferability of the model to a new region in Washington, while also allowing for experiments with alternative incentive and reward systems for attracting greater involvement, increased talent, and additional resources to the resolution of issues confronting rural regions.

II. MAJOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS[1]

Several program developments are particularly critical to understanding the transition occurring in the Partnership for Rural improvement. The following section of the report highlights many of these. As noted in the external review, PRI has demonstrated increased strength, greater visibility, and expanded awareness of the factors which make for success in rural community service and development activities. These general conclusions are supported by:

- the clear evidence of high interest and strong commitment by the collaborating educational institutions;
- the perception that the partners have a sense of ownership in PRI, a stake in its outcomes, and a feeling of responsibility to help make it succeed;
- the credibility which PRI has generally achieved in activities of assistance to local communities;
- an increased number and diversity of "users" of PRI;
- the "spin-offs" within the partner educational institutions directly or indirectly attributed to PRI;
- the instances of increased insight by staff and coordinating committee members as a result of their experiences and analysis.

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[1] Two major documents provide much of the source material for this report. The second phase of an external review and evaluation was undertaken during February, 1980. The observations of the review team provide a very helpful summary of major program developments in 1978-80 as well as suggestions for improving the PRI model. The reviewers were: Dr. Olaf Larson, Professor of Rural Sociology, Emeritus, Cornell University; Dr. J. Patrick Madden, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Pennsylvania State University; and Dr. Edward O. Moe (Chairman), Principal Sociologist and Coordinator, Rural Development Programs, SEA/Cooperative Research, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The proposal for new grant funds contains the projected program emphasis and implementation procedures for the 1980-83 period, and thus serves as the basis for new program thrusts in the 1980-81 period.

Within the sub-regions, several encouraging trends are apparent. There has been a strong positive turn-around in PRI achievements in the Western sub-region as compared with a year ago. The program in the Central sub-region has begun the process of constructive change, with major support from WSU faculty and a new Program Associate. The Eastern sub-region continues at the high level of achievement evident in the 1978-79 annual report.

Development of the "Task Force" Concept

The Regional Coordinating Committee initiated a region wide "task force" as a mechanism to identify and help resolve issues of regional concern. Although the concept was used in the Ferry County Growth Impact Study this was the first region-wide attempt to develop a task force, focused in this instance on the impact of railroad abandonment as it affected small towns and rural regions of Eastern Washington.

Eventually, more than 40 individuals from throughout eastern Washington were involved. PRI provided coordination and research support through Program and Research Associates. Several technical experts from the Universities and private groups extended technical assistance. The report, entitled, "Social Impact Assessment and Railroad Abandonment: Three Case Studies in Rural Eastern Washington," will soon be published under PRI sponsorship.

The program administrator and a program associate served on a second Task Force, on "Continuing Education, Extension, and Public Service," appointed by the Executive Vice President at Washington State University. The task force was asked to investigate the need and potential for improved programming, organization, and facilities to support outreach efforts of the University. Their report was published in May, 1980, entitled: "Continuing Education, Extension, and Public Service: Toward Strengthened Outreach Efforts at

Washington State University," and was jointly sponsored by Cooperative Extension, the Office of Continuing University Studies, and the Partnership. The University Administration has publicly indicated a strong commitment to act on the findings and recommendations.

These two examples provide a firm basis and useful experience for developing further task force activities as a means of dealing with major regional and institutional issues. The Partnership staff is better prepared as a consequence of these experiences to provide consultation and support for dealing rigorously and effectively, in a relatively short time-span, with major unresolved issues.

Developments within Universities and Colleges

A number of changes have been initiated, strengthened, or are in the planning stage at collaborating universities and colleges pertaining to what is referred to by terms such as "community service," "public service, " and "continuing education." Each of the changes have important implications for the continuing impact of the PRI concept:

- a new Community Service Center has been established at Eastern Washington University, with an advisory committee drawn from across the university and with representation from each of the PRI sub-regions;
- a new Regional Center for Continuing Education has been initiated at Eastern Washington University;
- a new Community Resource Center has been formed at Wenatchee Valley College;
- WSU has created a graduate level training program in the College of Education which leads to state certification for community education administration;

- a new graduate training program in social and community problem solving is underway at WSU, centered in the Department of Sociology and funded by a substantial grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare;

- Big Bend Community College "opened up" college facilities and arranged to have all staff on a four-day class week to provide free time for other professional responsibilities such as specialized weekend workshops and activities in the small communities within the college district;

- The Cooperative Graduate Planning program between EWU and WSU offers Master's level training to prepare professional planners for rural and smaller urban communities. More than forty students are enrolled in the cooperative program;

- Washington State Community College District #17 has expanded its continuing education thrust, through a new college center in Colville and course offerings in several new locations.

Funding Changes

The collaborating educational institutions have increased their direct monetary contributions to fund PRI. This includes $74,000 of new resources at WSU, $25,000 at EWU, $3,000 at Wenatchee Valley College, and $1,500 at Washington State Community College District #17. In addition the Title V Rural Development project is entirely devoted to PRI activity. These resources total $55,000.

As a result of proposals which PRI assisted in developing, new grant and contract funds have been made available. Examples include: a planning grant from HUD for the Almira community; a grant from the Washington Commission for Humanities for a video-film and booklet on the history and development of the Kalispel Indian Tribe; a contract to Wenatchee Valley College from the Council

on Post-Secondary Education for the development and testing of a displaced homemaker's program; an award to Washington State Community College District #17's Women's Programs to establish a Displaced Homemaker Multi-Service Center; and a planning grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for Washington State University and Wenatchee Valley College to examine public radio and television services for central Washington.

Production of Educational Materials

Educational materials produced (or on which substantial progress was made) included: the budgeting, accounting, and review videotape for training of municipal and county officials, prepared with the cooperation of the Washington State Auditor's Office; a three-volume handbook on growth impact assessment and growth management in preparation by EWU and WSU for use in rural communities; preparation (through the Task Force on Continuing Education described above) of a comprehensive directory of WSU resources and services available to the public; the task force report on Railroad Abandonment; several other videotapes produced for public distribution; and several working papers prepared by PRI staff members or program colleagues.

Evolution of the Linkage Function

PRI provides a linkage between resources for community problem-solving and the users of those resources. A key component of the PRI model is the initiation, maintenance, and strengthening of these linkages between providers and users on a continuing, organized basis. This involves both structure and process. The structure offers organizational neutrality within which resource providers may consider the needs of users and an appropriate feasible response. The process utilizes skills and competencies which include (among others) clarification of the nature of the problem for which resources are requested and facilitation of collaboration among resource providers.

There are countless instances in which linkage has been developed between a rural community and one or more external resources. Experience to date suggests that linkage between communities and agencies has often tended to be around an immediate critical problem such as a major energy development (i.e., Creston, Washington).

This linkage system requires the support of staff (designated as "program associates" or "community consultants") skilled in a number of functional roles, such as making entry into rural communities, diagnosing community problems or needs, communication, group process facilitation, and identifying and accessing appropriate resources. The effectiveness of staff depends in part upon "neutrality;" that is, staff serve the collaborative system as a whole rather than representing a single service provider. Interactional effects from the collaborative efforts appear to yield increasing competencies within local communities, increasing capacity of resource providers to respond, and problem solutions beyond what might have been achieved without the PRI concept.

Increasing Collaboration Among Agencies and Institutions

The regional and sub-regional committees illustrate the collaborative mode. They are doing an effective job of enhancing collaboration between and among agencies and institutions. The task force created for the railroad abandonment study is an example of developing and strengthening linkages among various agencies and institutions. Greater diversity of agencies and institutions involved in PRI projects is evident.

Increasing Competency of Educational Institutions to Support Planning and Problem Solving

Eastern Washington University and Washington State University are providing graduate students with "hands-on" internship or project experience in helping citizens and officials with the process of planning or solving problems. Students secure training which enriches their classroom experience and faculty learn from interaction with communities as they provide direct assistance and guide the work of students. Consequently, there is evidence of increased institutional competence for supporting local and regional planning and problem solving activities.

Increasing the Competence of Citizens and Agency Personnel

Process facilitation training, conflict-resolution skills, and other educational inputs have been provided by PRI staff in collaboration with partner organizations. PRI has helped to enhance local capacity to organize effectively and has helped agencies conduct useful projects.

Procedures for needs assessment have been undertaken with local communities to secure feed-back about perceptions of needs and priorities. Studies have shown there are wide variations from one rural community to another, in social indicators of local needs and citizen perceptions of needs and priorities. Particularized needs assessments supported by PRI and sensitive to local conditions and problems, have been helpful as training tools as well as offering direction to local plans and actions.

Other Program Developments

The preceding summary represents only a selection of program developments during the past year. Numerous other activities could be noted. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that these and other major developments each resulted from initiatives taken by PRI with collaborating organizations; the Partnership

can take credit for involvement in a wide range of productive rural improvement activities but must share that credit with a wide spectrum of individuals, groups, organizations, communities and other units which often contributed as much or more initiative than PRI staff.

III. EVALUATION STUDIES

Evaluation efforts during the 1979-80 period focused on: (1) preparation of case studies to assess the effectiveness of selected projects; (2) the second phase of external evaluation, to gain additional perspective on overall program effectiveness; (3) analysis of major PRI sponsored or co-sponsored events, to measure their effectiveness; and (4) initiation of summative evaluation procedures as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of each major segment of the PRI model. The results of these studies provide a partial basis for the transition to new program elements in 1980-81.

Case studies undertaken during the 1979-80 period included a selection of projects which illustrate the PRI concept in a variety of circumstances. They were undertaken by graduate students in sociology or regional planning, under the supervision of PRI staff. Copies of the reports are available in the PRI administrative offices.

A large number of major events have been sponsored or co-sponsored by PRI during this reporting period. Evaluation questionnaires were completed on a before-after basis for training events and selected other activities; post event feedback questionnaires were used to secure evaluative information for such events as the PRI annual forum.

The summative evaluation is well underway, with several working papers in process and a major monograph initiated. Several conference papers have also been presented and more are in preparation. Each of these contributes to articulation and analysis of selected components of the PRI program.

However, the major evaluation effort was focused on the second phase of external evaluation and review. The team of reviewers (listed in footnote #1) was asked to:

1. help identify and interpret the impact of PRI on (a) communities and organizations, (b) development processes, (c) degrees of collaboration, and (d) involvement of partner institutions;

2. assess the status of PRI in developing a broadly useful rural development model;

3. examine the viability and effectiveness of the PRI model in contrast to other approaches to rural planning and developing.

Drs. Moe, Madden and Larson visited the project region between February 23 and March 5. Roughly half of that time was devoted to visiting the sub-regions while the remaining period was devoted to consultation with staff and administrators, preparation of a report, and a presentation to the annual PRI Public Forum at WSU. Roughly 85 formal interviews were conducted throughout the region with individuals who had been involved in or observed the operation of some segment of PRI programs.

The full report is available for review and need not be summarized in detail here. However, the review team developed summary observations and recommendations related to issues which need attention if the program is, in their judgement, to successfully proceed. Key points include:

1. There has not been consistent involvement with state and federal agencies, in the linkage of these agencies with rural communities; some of these agencies have no sense of belonging to the partnership. Analysis is needed of the reasons for this situation and conditions under which agencies may be most effectively involved, as well as the most appropriate relationship of such agencies to the regional and sub-regional committees.

2. There is a need for continued and increased attention to tapping the existing knowledge and the new knowledge (research) resources of the universities, especially from the parts of the universities not traditionally involved in community service. It is apparent that there are widely differing conceptions of what is involved in research; some kinds of research elicit

strongly negative feelings at the more local level. Likewise it is apparent that within the universities there are widely differing views as to what constitutes community service (public service, continuing education, extension, and cooperative extension).

3. The need exists to encourage an understanding of rewards systems operative within partner (or potential partner) institutions and the implications of the rewards arrangements for encouraging or discouraging participation of individuals or organizations in collaborative activities. There is a need to strive for equity and for responsiveness of the rewards system within partner agencies and institutions.

4. The Regional Coordinating Committee is seen as facilitating information exchange among the sub-regions. A new and more lively role is recommended for the committee as represented by the Railroad Abandonment Task Force project. The committee performs a brokerage function which a single educational institution or a state or federal agency could not readily do. An enlarged role may be desirable, particularly with respect to proposals and plans by federal or state agencies to initiate programs within the region; i.e. the committee might serve more broadly as an information broker and as a kind of mediator between institutions and agencies.

The Regional Coordinating Committee might consider providing more feedback from its meetings and activities to the members of the sub-regional committees; it might also consider facilitating increased information exchange among the sub-regions.

5. A review is suggested of the criteria and the procedures for becoming a partner in PRI, especially at the sub-regional level, and of the roles and responsibilities of membership. This suggestion recognizes the need to strike a balance between (a) minimizing ambiguities, confusion, and possible conflict by formalizing procedures, objectives, roles, and responsibilities and

(b) maintaining flexibility so as to retain the nature of PRI as a continually emerging reality.

6. It is suggested that consideration be given to a systematic, periodic needs assessment in the region with provision built in for recognizing important within-region variations.

7. Reviewers suggest an expanded attempt to develop and maintain for use of the partners an updated inventory of the resources available within the total set of potential providers--educational institutions as well as public and private agencies. It is recognized that a good start on this inventory has been completed as WSU and EWU.

8. The need to document the PRI experience remains important; to maximize the lessons learned, provision might be made for the PRI staff who have been most fully involved for a long period (in the sub-regions, as EWU, and at WSU) to have some time set aside to reflect on the experience and to contribute to establishing a record of findings.

9. The capacity of PRI to assist on the full range of problems faced by rural communities has not yet been tested. An unparalleled opportunity for such testing is now emerging in the eleven county area. Massive new investments--power plants, mines, oil pipe lines--are about to be initiated. PRI is in place in the area, and is capable, potentially, of bringing together citizens, local governments, local planning and development bodies, local public service agencies and state and federal agencies to deal with the developments and their effects. Involvement in such a task would test existing and develop new collaborative mechanisms.

10. The transfer of PRI to new areas remains to be tested, also. There are many valuable lessons in the PRI experience which have been recorded. Many more need to be recorded. Such recording helps build a body of knowledge about collaborative problem solving, and is a continuing necessity to help define and describe the PRI model.

IV. ILLUSTRATIVE PROJECT ACTIVITY

The Partnership for Rural Improvement is currently involved in more than 80 projects. The activities selected for emphasis here merely illustrate key dimensions of the transition issues noted earlier. Inferences can be drawn from these (as well as other) projects with broad application to the underlying PRI concepts.

Several of the projects summarized here have been examined in much greater detail through systematic case studies, copies of which are available from the program administrative offices.

Kalispel Indian Tribal Development Project

Involvement with the Kalispel Indian Tribe began in the autumn of 1978 at the initiative of the tribal resource director, who requested assistance from the Eastern Sub-Region Program Associate in production of a documentary film about the tribe. Since the project clearly contained the potential for broad local appeal as well as basic historical values, the Washington Commission for the Humanities (WCH) was approached as a possible source of support. A widely representative, multi-interest team of individuals was assembled by invitation to help develop a grant proposal and serve as a steering committee for the project.

A proposal was prepared requesting approximately $17,000 to support preparation of two thirty-minute color video tapes and a companion booklet. The WCH approved the proposal in January, 1979.

The PRI Program Associate served as a facilitator and formal member of the steering committee, playing a key role in helping the committee members focus their various skills on implementation of the project. The task was particularly challenging because of the sometimes divergent priorities between

members of the Kalispel Indian community and individuals with more academic or specialized interests. The sub-regional PRI office provided logistical and clerical support for, as well as substantive participation in, the work of the steering committee, the tribe, and the technical production staff for the video tapes.

To date one thirty-minute tape has been completed and the second is in final stages of production. Work on the companion booklet is still underway. The first tape segment enjoyed a successful public showing at the 1980 PRI annual Public Forum. Plans are to arrange for public broadcast of the documentary upon its completion.

The project has already provided several unanticipated benefits for the tribe, the steering committee members, and PRI. A boost in self-esteem was evident among tribal members who participated in making the film. Also, in the course of research for the project, important Kalispel historical documents and artifacts were rediscovered. Hope has been expressed that the Kalispel will take advantage of this and go on to establish their own tribal museum.

The shared understanding which developed between the tribe and the steering committee has also been pointed to as one of the most valuable corollary outcomes of the project. Additionally, PRI has gained a great deal of valuable attention through involvement with the project and the PRI Program Associate has been asked to work with other WCH committees.

Omak Stampede Financial Impact Study

The Omak Stampede Financial Impact Study evolved as a result of a special request for technical assistance from the Omak Chamber of Commerce. Several months prior to the 1979 event--a three-day rodeo festival which is one of the largest in the Northwest--community leaders agreed there was

a need to know more about what the Stampede means to the small community in terms of dollar revenues.

The issue was an important one in that not everyone in the community, including some local business people, welcomed the annual invasion of their town by thousands of outsiders. Rather than merely speculate about the number of dollars left behind in Omak by these outsiders, it was felt that some factual data would contribute to solidifying the community, either positively or negatively, relative to this traditional community sponsored event.

The request for assistance was channeled from members of the PRI sub-regional coordinating committee to a PRI associate at Washington State University. A review of relevant literature produced no reference to previous attempts at measurement of impacts from such events. An original study design was therefore developed. In consultation with members of the Chamber of Commerce a survey was devised to elicit the desired information. The data collected were then taken to WSU for analysis. Two months following the Stampede a completed report describing the findings of the survey was prepared for the Chamber.

Grand Coulee Dam Area Development

Citizens in the Grand Coulee Dam area have in the past year become aware of tremendous impending growth impacts from several sources. The two major sources include a large scale mining development on the adjacent Colville Indian Reservation, and construction of a nearby coal-fired power plant by the Washington Water Power Company. Since early in 1979 PRI Central Sub-Region staff have worked with local officials and citizens in preparing to deal with anticipated impacts.

Early PRI efforts were directed at helping a local planning group organize and establish contacts with appropriate county and state level sources of community development assistance. PRI staff also provided assistance with preparation of a HUD 701 grant proposal.

Increasing concern over anticipated growth impacts led to a proposal for a community needs assessment survey to elicit citizen preferences for dealing with these impacts. PRI was asked to provide technical assistance in designing, printing, implementing, and analyzing the survey. Throughout the summer of 1979 PRI Central Sub-Region staff worked with local citizens and Washington State University faculty resource persons in designing the survey.

Difficulties ensued in the fall of 1979 when a series of expected delivery dates for the completed questionnaires could not be met. Several members of the survey steering committee were clearly dissatisfied with the slow progress of getting the survey into the field. In January of 1980 PRI University based staff became involved with the survey project. The experience and professionalism of these staff members moved the project ahead quickly. Final issues concerning the survey design were resolved and a commitment to deliver the questionnaires by the first week in March was kept.

After the survey was completed, an interim PRI Central Sub-Region associate was able to arrange for area citizens to begin analyzing the data as part of a three-credit computer science class offered through Big Bend Community College. A program for analyzing the data was developed and computer work begun. Presently efforts are being undertaken to establish work groups to use the survey findings in developing comprehensive plans for the area communities.

Rockford Community Development

Like many rural communities located near metropolitan areas, the town of Rockford began experiencing rapid growth in the mid-seventies. At that time several unsuccessful attempts were made to establish a mechanism for dealing with the growth of the community. Until recently much of this growth had proceeded haphazardly. No zoning ordinances existed to regulate the density, character, or location of new housing development.

Responding to the acute need to develop such a mechanism for regulating growth, local officials contacted the Spokane County Planning Department for assistance. There were referred to a faculty member in Eastern Washington University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning. The long term goal was to help Rockford initiate a self-sustaining planning process. During the summer of 1979 this task was undertaken by the faculty member, PRI associates and a class of planning students. The initial task was to draft an interim zoning ordinance for the small community.

By January of 1980 an ordinance that had gone through several revisions was still rejected by the residents of Rockford. Part of the problem in drafting an acceptable ordinance appeared to stem from a lack of adequate citizen involvement in the drafting process.

PRI staff were asked to assist the fledgling planning commission in developing skills for more effectively utilizing citizen input. Workshops were given by PRI staff in which methods for conducting public meetings and disseminating information were presented.

Following these workshops further public meetings were held during which citizens identified issues and goals they desired the planning commission to address. EWU planning students are continuing to collect data upon which to base development of a comprehensive plan. Current scheduling calls for public

presentation of a draft of a comprehensive planning document by the fall of 1980. Presently it appears the planning process has taken hold in Rockford and is progressing with essential citizen support.

WSU Task Force on Continuing Education

In April of 1979 the WSU administration appointed a task force to describe the extent of the university's continuing education efforts and detail the potential need for and use of a conference/continuing education center. The primary goal of the effort was to identify ways of strengthening university outreach.

PRI involvement with the task force was focused heavily on institutional development for better linking the knowledge resources of the university with the needs of Washington state citizens. The PRI program administrator served as chair of the task force, while a program associate served as a task force member, providing research support for its efforts. A PRI supported research assistant undertook several data collection and report drafting efforts.

During its year of existence the task force compiled a comprehensive history of outreach development at WSU. A series of working papers were developed dealing with: the organization of continuing education, extension, and public service at WSU; continuing education programs at other major universities across the country; and potential components of a continuing education center at WSU. The task force also sought university-wide input on the continuing education concept through a series of meetings with faculty, staff, and deans.

The task force recently issued its completed report. Based on the substantial amount of data collected, the task force has recommended the following be included in a program of institutional development: establishing an improved reward system to encourage outreach program development by faculty; developing mechanisms for more effectively allocating university resources

to support faculty proposing to undertake outreach activity; seeking external financial support to expand outreach programs; and establishment of a leadership position within central administration to be an advocate for the outreach mission.

These and other recommendations should be of assistance to WSU as the university pursues a more rigorous program of continuing education and service to Washington citizens.

Railroad Abandonment Task Force Study

Rail service is a vital source of economic life for many rural Eastern Washington communities. Its discontinuation in many cases threatens severe economic and social impacts for both the immediate communities and larger service regions. The issue of the effects of railroad abandonment had been identified at the 1979 PRI Public Forum as being of concern to many Eastern Washington citizens. As an effort to address this issue of region-wide concern the Regional Coordinating Committee commissioned a special railroad abandonment task force study in June, 1979.

During the summer of 1979 a core group of approximately 40 citizens was recruited to develop the study. A staff coordinator was selected and a research associate hired to work with the task force. Three communities were selected for study which were being impacted or stood to be impacted by discontinuation of rail service. Citizen members of the task force participated in all aspects of the study from selection of communities to be examined, to questionnaire construction.

Often citizen members with ties to local areas were instrumental in assisting researchers to gain entree to the communities under study. The diverse composition of the task force also contributed to the establishment of necessary linkages between various institutions and agencies concerned

with the study effort. The effort itself provided a valuable experience in developing directions for employment of the task force concept in the future.

The recently completed report of this pilot task force identifies many presently occurring or potential impacts of both community and regional concern. The need for inclusion of qualitative social science methodologies in studies of this nature is heavily emphasized. It is hoped that citizen leaders and government officials responsible for working in areas affected by railroad abandonment will benefit from the findings of this study which demonstrates the need for addressing often neglected social impacts.

Overview of Projects

Each of these projects has provided an opportunity to both demonstrate and improve the effectiveness of the PRI model in dealing with a diverse set of problems which typically confront rural citizens and policy makers. PRI involvement with the Kalispel Tribal Development Project points to the benefits of broadening project involvement beyond what is conventionally associated with rural development. Here the PRI collaborative model was enhanced by the ability to provide services along with linking users to other sources of problem-solving assistance. Also the organizational neutrality of PRI, i.e. the "neutral square" role, was demonstrably effective in facilitating the cooperation of individuals with diverse perspectives in achieving a common goal.

The Omak Stampede Financial Impact Study is an example of the PRI network serving to link a clearly defined need for technical assistance with the specialized knowledge resources of the university. A large part of PRI's emphasis on institutional development has been directed at making these resources more accessible to users. Sub-regional committee members in this case provided the communication channel for accessing a special knowledge

resource at WSU. Understanding how this communication process occurs can help in the establishment of permanent, more effective channels for linking the knowledge resources of education institutions in the Partnership with needs for rural problem-solving.

Community development assistance in Rockford has demonstrated the consistent need for PRI to continue helping develop problem-solving competencies among rural citizens. The ability of the PRI associate in the field to identify needs for these efforts is a vital component of the program associate role. This approach also complements PRI's neutral square role. Citizens and officials in rural areas thus come to feel they can request assistance from PRI without threat of losing control to an outside agency.

PRI involvement in the Grand Coulee Area has also provided a valuable opportunity to learn about other requirements of the program associate role. In addition to the ability to diagnose community problems, experience here clearly demonstrated the need for other functional skills as well. Foremost among these being the ability to deal with local political structures after initial entry to the community has been made, and skills in group process facilitation.

Involvement with the WSU Task Force on Continuing Education has served both as a direct effort at institutional development and as an opportunity to learn how the task force concept can be applied to these efforts. Further knowledge of how the task force concept can be put into practice as a mechanism for addressing issues of more broad concern has derived from experience with the Railroad Abandonment Task Force Study. The Community Service Fellowship program, to be developed in the forthcoming grant period, can build on the knowledge gained from these and other project experiences, to make the links between educational institutions and needs for rural problem-solving more productive in the future.

V. PROGRAM EMPHASES FOR 1980-1983

As the external review team noted, support mechanisms for collaborative public service appear to need further strengthening within partner organizations. The full potential has by no means been reached. Additional effort is especially critical in the educational institutions that serve as the "infra-structure" of PRI. The scope of PRI sponsored activity has been limited by design in the formative years to a narrow range of partners and issues. The opportunity now exists to broaden the scope of programs to meet a wide array of community needs, while enhancing the rural service missions of current partners and potential participants.

The non-land grant educational institutions do not receive continuing state or federal funds to support community service. A support base for the community service function must therefore be developed if program continuity is to be maintained. Nonetheless resource commitment to PRI by these partners is a clear indication of their determination to respond to the needs of rural communities.

The PRI concept has not yet been comprehensively tested in a new setting to determine its applicability beyond the original eleven-county region. The transfer potential of the PRI model and methodology of transfer have yet to be fully examined.

Each of these new opportunities suggest the Partnership for Rural Improvement is in a potentially unique position to productively impact the provision of services to the rural areas of eastern Washington.

Institutional Development

As noted earlier, Eastern Washington University has recently established a Community Service Center to improve citizen access to university resources and to coordinate the delivery of university public services. However much work needs to be done to realize the center's full potential. At Wenatchee Valley College a Community Resource Center has been providing services for nearly a year. Yet many questions remain as to its future, its relationship to PRI, and its compatibility with institutional goals. Washington State University is examining its continuing education and public service coordination. Conditions seem ideal for PRI to assist the university to evaluate various organization and program alternatives. It is conceivable that PRI could serve as the primary mechanism for institutional development. Other examples could be cited, but these cases demonstrate the opportunities now at hand.

Development of Community Service Roles

The Partnership for Rural Improvement has demonstrated that community service staff roles appear essential to the success of the collaborative services model. PRI is based on the concept of developing effective communication and organizational linkages. These linkages have been developed and maintained by individuals operating from PRI's neutral setting. At least three intertwined roles are at work. Each role is located in a different organizational setting but there is clearly overlap in the skills and knowledge required for each role.

The most local role is performed by citizen leaders, volunteers, and para-professionals. They provide knowledge of local issues and community characteristics. They assist in identifying problems and needed resource support.

The external community consultant role is carried out by the individuals based in community colleges, agencies or other service units. They link the institution or agency to community organizations local leaders. They assist in defining issues to which external resources might be applied. The community consultant supports program development, building organizational relationships, and training activity.

The role of university-based specialist in community service is performed by faculty at Eastern Washington University and Washington State University. They facilitate the involvement of other faculty in community service activity. They assist facult to develop community service skills and attitudes. University-based specialists are also knowledgeable about organizational change and the processes of institutional development.

Each of the community service roles have been demonstrated by PRI staff members and other individuals working with PRI. However, understanding of these roles has been limited. The opportunity now exists to articulate the roles more definitively and to provide experience within the PRI framework. Further refinement of each community service role is needed. It is important to examine in more detail the relationship between each role and the partner network. The potential of performing these roles in settings outside of rural planning and development needs to be explored.

Broadened Organization and Program

The number of institutions and agencies participating in PRI has been relatively limited during the first four years. The partnership has not reflected the broader potential of participating institutions and agencies; only part of the service mission of partners has been explored. There is potential for including additional partners and extending PRI assistance to a much wider clientele. The functions of program development, inter-agency collaboration,

organizational development, training activities, and resource linking can readily be expanded with additional resources. Adult and continuing education, organization of conferences, and action-oriented research could be more directly linked to other forms of community service.

Telephone, video, and computer technology need further testing as mechanisms to link resources and inform partners about potential contributions from a variety of sources. Resource directories, accessible by telephone and computer terminals, would greatly facilitate communication and use of resources. Much of the appropriate technology is already in place and simply needs greater application to the community service function.

Development of a Community Services Support Base

Long term funding is needed if the activities generated with PRI assistance are to be sustained after termination of grant funds. Severe financial constraints presently limit participation in community service activity. Greater public understanding of community service is needed if the potential contributions of partners is to be realized.

Members of the partnership support PRI participation in developing a support base for community service activities intended to overcome many of the funding obstacles. The state legislature has indicated interest in support for "community education" as one mechanism for providing funds for community service at the local level. Furthermore, an increasing number of citizens are requesting that community services be more readily available from institutions of higher education and other resource organizations. Exploration of alternatives for long term community service support is therefore proposed as a major activity.

Diffusion of the PRI Model

A viable model should be transferable to settings other than the location

in which it was developed. If the partnership concept is to prove applicable state-wide or nationally, its transferability needs testing on a modest scale as a prelude to deliberate wider diffusion. PRI is therefore expanding its geographic base to include an additional four-county community college district in southeast Washington.

A second diffusion thrust will encourage preparation of additional descriptive and analytical materials which document the experience of PRI in developing an alternative model. A substantial monograph and a series of additional working papers are anticipated, as well as other diffusion tools. These products will detail the components of the model, the programming strategies used in model development and will serve as helpful training materials.

VI. PLANS FOR 1980-81

The mechanisms to implement the proposed emphases are partially in place. As noted earlier, a Community Service Center has recently been created at Eastern Washington University and a Community Resource Center is operational at Wenatchee Valley College. However, in neither of these cases, nor in the other partner educational institutions, does there exist an adequate mechanism to involve faculty in community service programs. While PRI also has offices at Washington State University, Washington State Community College District #17, and Big Bend Community College there is presently little incentive for faculty, other than those from WSU Cooperative Extension and PRI, to become involved. Likewise at the community level there is a need to develop improved mechanisms for the coordination and delivery of services.

Task Forces

PRI has made excellent use of the task force concept to implement several projects. It has been used to examine the potential growth impacts of energy development in Ferry, Lincoln, and Spokane counties. It has been used to assess the social impacts of railroad abandonment on small rural communities. Although there is nothing particularly new about the task force as a method of dealing with issues, the manner in which such groups operate varies widely. Productivity depends on the form of organization, resources to support the methodology, and incentives for productive work. PRI proposes to expand the use of task forces as one of the strategies for supporting the increased collaboration between faculty, students, public officials, citizens and agency personnel. The focus of the groups will be on issues of a region-wide nature that affect the quality of rural life in eastern Washington.

The focus of activity in this area of program emphasis during 1980-1981 will be to:

1. Establish a task force project to assess the region-wide rural improvement needs as a basis for selecting future task force topics.
2. Establish one major task force on a rural improvement issue for which PRI involvement might be helpful in bringing about a resolution.
3. Develop a preliminary sequence of task force topics through 1983 in order to recruit participants.

Community Service Fellowships

Several PRI projects have benefited from the intensive, short-term input of knowledgeable and skilled individuals who were willing to offer their assistance without entering staff positions. Such participation will be expanded and applied to new projects through "community service fellowships." The fellowships will vary in length. University or community college and other agency personnel will apply for such fellowships to work intensively on an issue identified through the Partnership for Rural Improvement. The fellowships will provide part-time salary replacement and expenses and will require administrative approval and endorsement.

The community service fellow will work on a task force project and be accountable to one of the partner units sponsoring the project. The fellowship program is designed to promote interdisciplinary activity and interaction among professionals interested in community service. This should foster mutual learning and increased capacity of individuals in communities and organizations to deal with rural issues. The community service fellowship experience should provide the participants with a basis for further collaborative relationships.

The "fellowship" concept is a strategy for providing incentive to involve faculty and other knowledgeable individuals in community service activity. It is designed specifically to test processes in the educational institutions

for considering community service as legitimate "scholarly activity" in the faculty reward system. It should be considered initially as an experimental device to achieve increased credibility for the community service role described earlier, but does appear to have long-range potential.

During 1980-1981, PRI will attempt to implement the Community Service Fellowship program. Strategies will be to:

1. develop recruiting and selection procedures for fellows that create institutional commitment to the program;
2. develop a project management system in order to provide accountability for the fellows to the task force mission;
3. recruit three to five fellows to conduct the initial needs assessment for the task force issues;
4. identify fellows for the second task force scheduled to begin in January, 1981.

Internships

A number of the duties to be undertaken by the task forces could appropriately be assisted by students preparing for professions in rural areas. Internships are to be made available to graduate students for one or more semesters/quarters. Interns will be supervised by PRI staff and community service fellows. They may participate in inter-institutional exchange. The internships should be particularly useful in preparing individuals for the university, community college, agency, and other community service roles described earlier. Internships should serve as a mechanism to prepare a broader range of professionals who can contribute to the resolution of rural issues. This internship concept builds upon existing university programs, such as the Masters of Rural (WSU), Urban (EWU) and Regional Planning, but adds the dimension of inter-institutional exchange of interns.

PRI will attempt to provide learning experiences for university students during 1980-1981. Primarily the effort will be to:

1. use two graduate assistant/interns to support the work of the task forces and community service fellows;

2. use one graduate student to assist the program administrator in implementing strategies for institutional development.

Community Education Demonstration Site

PRI has examined community mechanisms to encourage collaboration in the solution of local problems. While many resource organizations provide services to communities, a viable means for coordinating the delivery of services at the community level is not presently in place. PRI is proposing that a demonstration site be established to increase the capacity of rural communities and individuals to solve problems and realize opportunities through a coordinated system of community education. The community of Moses Lake, School District #161, Big Bend Community College, and many other partners are to be involved. There is support for a site that will: (1) demonstrate collaboration between a local school district community schools program, a community college and other educational and service organizations, (2) explore the processes of community development as a dimension of community education, and (3) assist other communities to establish and operate coordinated community education programs.

PRI has the opportunity to provide on-going organization at the community level. This is comparable to the effort by PRI to institutionalize the concepts and mechanisms of the model within resource organizations. The concept of community education, properly utilized, has the potential to demonstrate such a structure and at the same time address the issue of increasing the capacity of individuals to fill the community service practitioner role described in an earlier section. Specifically, the focus of activity for this program emphasis during 1980-1981 will be to:

1. assist Moses Lake School District #161 in adding a community problem-solving component to its community education program;

2. build a collaborative program delivery mechanism among community service agencies in Grant and Adams counties interested in community education;

3. help Big Bend Community College establish a leadership role in community education training and development in Grant and Adams counties;

4. provide training for community service practitioners in assessing community education needs and resources.

Expansion to Walla Walla Community College District

The Partnership for Rural Improvement is proposing to extend the key elements of its model to the four-county region of southeastern Washington served by Walla Walla Community College. The purpose of this expansion is to test in another geographic setting the viability of the programming strategy used in the first years of PRI. This process should not only provide PRI with an opportunity for further refinement of the model, but give needed experience in devising an appropriate diffusion strategy. As this endeavor is successful it is expected that PRI will extend its services into other areas.

During 1980-1981 the focus of diffusion activity will be to:

1. establish a contractual arrangement between Walla Walla Community College and Washington State University to provide personnel and financial resources to PRI in Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla counties;

2. conduct a planning conference for potential partners to initiate organizational and communication linkages among education institutions, public service agencies, and local jurisdictions;

3. organize a sub-regional committee to plan and conduct collaborative rural improvement activity in the four-county area;

4. document the processes used to transfer the PRI model into the new sub-region.

VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

The Partnership for Rural Improvement has enjoyed strong financial support from partner organizations and agencies. The fourth year of PRI was a time when financial commitments were made to guarantee that the services demonstrated worthwhile since 1976 would be maintained. The success of PRI in meeting its initial proposal goals also provided new opportunities. These new opportunities formed the basis for a grant renewal request to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. A three-year grant totaling $958,585 was awarded in April, 1980. Now with the combined resources of the partner organizations and Kellogg the financial support to carry out the proposed objectives is assured.

Financial Report 1979-1980

The 1979-1980 budget reflects the agreement between Washington State University and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation negotiated in 1976. Washington State University increased its contribution to PRI in the form of personnel and operational support. Salary and fringe benefits were paid for one-half of the program administrator position (Cooperative Extension); for one-quarter FTE for each of two program associates in the College of Education; for one-half FTE of the program associate in Sociology (Central Administration); and for one-quarter FTE for each of two field based program associates (Cooperative Extension), the total university commitment was to 2.0 FTE's in addition $9,000.00 was made available for time-slip wages and travel.

These other educational institutions made direct fund commitments to PRI during the year. Eastern Washington University contributed 1.5 FTE to PRI and when combined with the Community Service Center, a total dollar figure of $67,813.00. Wenatchee Valley College contributed $3,000.00 to the salary of the program assistant in the Western Sub-region. Washington State Community College District #17 contributed $1,500.00 for operational support.

As in the past, exact estimates on the contributed resources of partner organizations are difficult to come by; however, staff release time totaling at least $100,000.00 is reasonable. Contributions of goods and services and indirect cost support are estimated to exceed $250,000.00. Office space, accounting services, utilities, and other services continue to be provided PRI by Big Bend Community College, Eastern Washington University, Washington State Community College District #17, Wenatchee Valley College, and Washington State University.

The major contractural service agreements during 1979-1980 were continuations of previous agreements with Big Bend Community College ($26,500.00), Eastern Washington University ($29,500.00); Washington State Community College District #17 ($28,000.00); and Wenatchee Valley College ($28,000.00). The contractual arrangement with Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory ended June 30, 1979.

The Partnership for Rural Improvement did not utilize all the funds available to the program during this fiscal year. Time slip personnel were not employed during the year to the extent anticipated. The remaining funds committed to fringe benefits resulted from an excessive budget projection in 1979. When the encumbrances under Contractual Services are considered this item is very close the the projected budget. Travel expenses were slightly higher than anticipated and resulted in a small deficit. This deficit can be subtracted from the 1980-1981 budget with minimal impact.

Budget for 1980-1981

W. K. Kellogg funds were awarded to PRI using budget categories requested by the Foundation in the sum of $357,480. The carry forward of funds remaining from 1979-1980 were also allowed. These totaled $15,426.14. The total amount of Kellogg funds available is listed in Figure 1. The budget that combines Washington State University support and Kellogg money is detailed in Figure 2. This budget reflects WSU commitments and uses the university's accounting system. WSU has committed to the full implementation of the 1976-1980 agreements in documents already in the possession of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. This involves the funding and support for 4.0 faculty positions. Anticipated WSU expenditures for direct financial support total approximately $145,000. This figure can be better refined when two vacant positions are filled.

Although the various commitments by several partners are not shown in the budget statement, this strong statement of support has to be one of the most optimistic signs of PRI's future. Agreements have been signed which will provide direct financial support by Eastern Washington University in the amount of $50,622; and when combined with support for the Community Service Center total over $70,000. Major progress was made in obtaining direct financial support from two community colleges for the field program associate positions. Wenatchee Valley College will fund 1/2 of the position in the Western Sub-region at about $12,000. Likewise Washington State Community College District 17 in Spokane has committed to $14,500. These are excellent examples of the support PRI is receiving from partner institutions. Of course, indirect, but equally necessary contributions are also available to the program.

The general direction and budget decisions in this annual report follow the charge given by the Regional Coordinating Committee at its meeting on June 4-5, 1980.

KELLOGG FUNDS AVAILABLE
FOR 1980-1981

STAFF SALARIES, WAGES, FRINGE BENEFITS	$ 66,415,93
FELLOWSHIPS, INTERNSHIPS, CONSULTANTS	118,000.00
FACULTY TIME, PARTNER INSTITUTIONS	159,360.16
PRINTING, MAILING	12,000.00
TRAVEL	11,160.05
COMPUTER SERVICES	1,000.00
EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES	5,000.00
	$372,936.14

Figure 2

PARTNERSHIP FOR RURAL IMPROVEMENT

Combined Budget
1980-1981

00,01 SALARIES AND WAGES	FUNDS	BUDGET
WKKF - Cash Balance	$ 1,935.93	
WKKF - Approved Budget (Revised)	53,400.00	
WSU	114,000.00	
	$169,335.93	$169,335.93
02 CONTRACTUAL SERVICES		
WKKF - Cash Balance	$ 8,031.12	
Cash Transfer to Goods and Services	[8,031.12]	
WKKF - Approved Budget	118,000.00	
	$118,000.00	$118,000.00
03 GOODS AND SERVICES		
WKKF - Cash Balance	$ .00	
Cash Transfer from Fringe Benefits	4,394.41	
Cash Transfer from Office Supplies	508.49	
Cash Transfer from Equipment	1,426.14	
Cash Transfer from Contractual Services	8,031.12	
WKKF - Approved Budget (Revised)	157,000.00	
	$171,360.16	$171,360.16
04 TRAVEL		
WKKF - Deficit Balance	$ (839.95)	
WKKF - Approved Budget	12,000.00	
WSU	2,500.00	
	$ 13,660.05	$ 13,660.05
05 COMPUTER SERVICES		
WKKF - Cash Balance	$ .00	
WKKF - Approved Budget	1,000.00	
	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00
06 EQUIPMENT		
WKKF - Cash Balance	$ 1,426.14	
Cash Transfer to Goods and Services	[1,426.14]	
WKKF - Approved Budget	5,000.00	
	$ 5,000.00	$ 5,000.00

07 FRINGE BENEFITS

WKKF - Cash Balance	$ 4,394.41	
Cash Transfer to Goods and Services	[4,394.41]	
WKKF - Approved Budget (Revised)	11,080.00	
WSU	28,500.00	
	$ 39,580.00	$ 39,580.00

TOTALS

WKKF - Cash Balance	$ 15,456.14	
WKKF - Approved Budget	357,480.00	
WSU	145,000.00	
	$517,936.14	$517,936.14